

# Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds

## Drought Preparedness Breakout Summary

*April 12-13, 2010, iPlex, Swift Current, SK*

### Perceptions of drought

As is apparent from the breakout sessions, drought means different things to different people in different places at different times. There was, however, a **reoccurring theme** in the discussion groups that *drought is a dry, stressful period with negative implications for farms, families, businesses, communities wildlife and watersheds, but can also present certain opportunities.*

### Coping with drought

#### **Past management strategies:**

- Stock pile hay/feed, increase well/dugout supply capabilities, improve water-use efficiency, conserve and ration water, manage pastures to have carry-over, employ conservation tillage practices, xero-scaping, grow drought tolerant crop and forage varieties, carry crop insurance, use continuous cropping rotations, maintain stubble/trash cover on cropland, and adjust herd size.

### Preparing for the future...

There were numerous strategies for improving drought preparedness identified by workshop participants. The following is a brief summary of these strategies:

#### **Education/Awareness:**

- Communicate the benefits of proactive approaches, such as conservation and using water efficiently, to all stakeholders.
- Address 'water abuse' issues by debunking the 'myth of abundance'.
- Engage existing communication pathways and networks to disseminate new technologies and ideas.
- Promote the watershed approach and encourage networking and collaboration between all stakeholders.

#### **Soft Strategies:**

- Manage excessive moisture as an opportunity to increase preparedness for the next drought.
- Develop water use monitoring programs that can be used to track water use over time.
- Rethink 'wastewater' and identify potential ways of using it as an opportunity.
- Encourage innovation in water and land management.

#### **Planned Adaptation:**

- Ensure water security by exploring potential sources and augmenting existing storage capacities and supplies.
- Develop research projects that improve our knowledge of drought preparedness in agricultural and urban settings.
- Shift the focus from managing drought impacts to building drought preparedness.